

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for annotating documents displayed on a computer system comprising:
displaying a document on a display screen;
invoking an annotation program such that an annotation field and the document are displayed simultaneously on the display screen; and
allowing a user of the annotation program to copy portions of material from the document to the annotation field.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising allowing the user to enter user-defined information into the annotation field.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the user-defined information is user notes.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the document is a word-processor-based document.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the document is a desktop-application-based document.
6. The method of claim 1 further wherein the document is a portion of an Internet site.
7. The method of claim 2 further comprising providing the user with the option of editing the information contained in the annotation field.

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8. The method of claim 2 further comprising providing the user with the option of saving the information in the annotation field.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising providing the user with the option of printing the information contained in the annotation field.

10. The method of claim 9 further comprising generating a summary of the information contained in the annotation field.

11. The method of claim 9 further comprising generating a summary of the information contained in a user-defined manner.

12. The method of claim 10 wherein the generating further comprises arranging the summary information sequentially.

13. The method of claim 10 wherein the generating further comprises providing a reference to the portion of the document that the summary information refers to.

14. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

storing the notes of a plurality of users; and

allowing each user of the plurality of users to search the notes of the other users of the plurality of users, wherein the notes of the plurality of other users were entered by each user of the

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plurality of users in an annotation field simultaneously displayed with a document.

15. The method defined in claim 14 wherein storing the notes of a plurality of users comprises storing the notes on a server.

16. The method defined in claim 14 wherein storing the notes of a plurality of users comprises storing the each user's notes at that user's location.

17. The method defined in claim 14 wherein allowing each user of the plurality of users to search the notes of the other users of the plurality of users comprises allowing each user to search the notes using a web browser.

18. A document annotation system implemented on a computer having a display screen configured to:
display a document on the display screen;
invoke an annotation program such that an annotation field and the document are displayed simultaneously on the display screen; and
allow a user of the annotation program to copy portions of material from the document to the annotation field.

19. The system of claim 18 further configured to allow the user to enter user-defined information into the annotation field.

20. The system of claim 19 wherein the user-defined information is user notes.

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21. The system of claim 19 wherein the document is a word processor based document.

22. The system of claim 18 wherein the document is a portion of an Internet site.

23. The system of claim 19 further configured to provide the user with the option of editing the information contained in the annotation field.

24. The system of claim 19 further configured to provide the user with the option of saving the information in the annotation field.

25. The system of claim 24 further configured to provide the user with the option of printing the information contained in the annotation field.

26. The system of claim 25 further configured to generate a summary of the information contained in the annotation field.

27. The system of claim 25 further configured to arrange the summary information sequentially.

28. The system of claim 27 further configured to provide a reference to the portion of the document that the summary information refers to.

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29. The system of claim 18 further configured to:

store annotations of a plurality of users, wherein the notes of the plurality of other users were entered by each user of the plurality of users in an annotation field simultaneously displayed with a document; and

allow the user to search the annotations of the plurality of users.

30. The system defined in claim 29 further configured to store the annotations on a server.

31. The system defined in claim 29 further configured to store each user's annotations at that user's location.

32. The system defined in claim 29 further configured to allow each user to search the annotations using a web browser.

33. A method for allowing users to annotate electronic documents comprising:

allowing a user to annotate an electronic document;

storing the annotation; and

allowing the user to search the annotations of a plurality of other users.

34. The method defined in claim 33 wherein storing the annotation comprises storing the annotations on a server.

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35. The method defined in claim 33 wherein storing the annotations comprises storing the annotations at the user's location.

36. The method defined in claim 33 wherein:
the electronic document is a web page;

and

allowing the user to search the annotations of the plurality of users comprises allowing the user to search the annotations using a web browser.

37. The method defined in claim 33 wherein:
the electronic document is a web page related to an on-line course; and

allowing the user to search the annotations of the plurality of users comprises allowing the user to search the annotations using a web browser.

38. The method defined in claim 33 wherein:
allowing a user to annotate an electronic document comprises allowing the user to enter the annotation in an annotation field simultaneously displayed with the electronic document;
and

the annotations of the plurality of other users were entered by each user of the plurality of other users in an annotation field simultaneously displayed with a document.

39. A document annotation system comprising at least one computer and configured to:

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wherein the annotations of the plurality of other users were entered by each user of the

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plurality of other users in an annotation field
simultaneously displayed with a document.

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